

Program Area Selection

Public Facilities

Executive Summary

The planning grant will help the non-profit organization Arlington Arts and Enrichment Program (AAEP) envision a hub in the center of town to meet the wellness, education, economic and cultural needs of the community. “The Arlington Community Arts and Wellness Center,” (working title) will primarily serve the Arlington area but will be available to the greater Bennington County and beyond.

Chief Executive Officer

Keith Squires, Chair of the Arlington Select Board

Contact Person

Col. Jim Baker, (Retired) Arlington Renewal Project

Carol Farley, Director of Arlington Arts and Enrichment Program

Person who prepared the application

Bebe Bullock

Estimated Project Funding

\$60,000

Subgrantee and Borrower

DNA

National and State Objectives

Public Facilities

Public Services

Economic Development

National Objective

Low and moderate income

Blight

Program Management

DNA

General Administration *up to 8% of the request can go to General Admin costs*

Town Administrator: Keith Squires

Project Manager: **Same as above**

Environmental Review Release

Project Description

Service Area

The Arlington area is comprised of a series of towns--Arlington, Sandgate and Sunderland--in the Valley of Vermont in Bennington County. Of the three towns, Arlington is the largest with its population of 2,543; Sandgate has 375 people and Sunderland 898. The town of Arlington was the first capital of Vermont in 1778 and, during the Revolutionary War, was the base of Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys. Then, in the 20th century, the town became the home and muse to many famous American artists and writers including Norman Rockwell, Rockwell Kent, and Dorothy Canfield Fisher. Today, the town has a fairly diverse economy with 1,024 jobs in 99 business establishments: manufacturing, healthcare, education, small business, agriculture, forestry and tourism. Fisher Elementary has 208 students in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade and the Arlington Memorial Middle and High School has 194 students and has received a 'silver' in the *US News and World Report*'s high school rankings. In the Arlington School District, 45% of the students qualify for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program. The public buildings, providing services for the community include the Martha Canfield Memorial Free Library (which also houses the Russell Vermontiana Collection), Battenkill Valley Health Center, the Arlington Recreation Park, and the Canfield Community House and Burdett Commons. In Arlington, the median family income is \$59,121 (for a family of four), well below the Vermont median of \$70,538. HUD states that 38% of Arlington residents are considered low to moderate income. Household expenses are expensive as well: 35% of Arlington households pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs (43% in Arlington Village; Vermont's average is 36%) and 10% of Arlington households pay over 50% of their income on housing costs. Of the Arlington area population, the largest group is over 65.

Provide a detailed description of the scope of work and be sure to identify each Work Product resulting from the planning work

The scope of the work will look at the feasibility of and work needed to create a hub in the center of town to meet the wellness, education, economic and cultural needs of the community. There will be multiple meetings with the steering committee, focus groups, and whole community to

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update concepts and incorporate new ideas from stakeholders. The work products will include:
a) Architect Assessment Report for all buildings and the site with site and floor plans, including a final building condition report and a final project construction budget b) Architecture renderings of proposed buildings and site c) Market/feasibility study of all potential ideas for the property, including but not exclusive to: exhibit space, tourism, theater, office space, fitness center and squash courts and after school, summer and internship programming. The study will include public meetings, surveys and research d) Recommendations with associated cost for decommissioning the church e) Report on utilities between buildings f) Recommendations with associated cost for acoustic and lighting g) Plan by a non-profit consultant for recommended board structure to support property and programming h) Updated Boundary and Topographic Survey i) Results from Radon Test j) A review of the septic system k) Report from Hazmat Assessment l) Report and recommendations on condition of plumbing and heating for all buildings m) Recommendations from Environmental and Historical Review.

Floodplain

The Church property is not in the floodplain. **See attachment map.**

Designated Village

Yes

Environmental Review Identifier Number

See Quin Mann

Budget

Planning only

Activity

All supporting documents for budget items

Budget Consideration for Program Management

DNA

25% Match Requirement

- Grant Writing for Planning Grant: Bebe Bullock from Keelan Family Foundation
- Architectural Site Visit: Bruce King
- Fire and Safety Visit and report:
- Building Inspection done by Joshua Sherman and Carolyn-*see Jim Baker for cost. Can we get a copy of the bill?*
- Architect Conceptual Drawings and Report - Holmes, King, Kallquest, and Associates

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Pre-Award Costs

-Architectural renderings-need to ask for approval

Other Resources Must add up to 25% of the VCDP funds requested

-Arlington Arts and Enrichment Program meeting with potential partners *invoice from Bebe and Carol*

-Battenkill Valley Health Center meetings and grant writing

-Investor for Rectory space?

-Capital Campaign for Squash Courts: Green Mountain Squash *invoice from Bill Bullock about discussions already with Steve Hall*

-Revolving Loan Fund: DNA *Jim double checking. If the fund is inactive VCDP/HUD RLF need to commit 20% of the balance*

-Town of Arlington, possible: waive or reduce all permit fees as per Planning Grant directions

-Fire and Safety Review donation

Narrative

Priorities of the Consolidated Plan

Narrative about Regional Plan and how The Project is meeting the goals. 2. The implications of the Project and a written statement from Jim Sullivan that The Project is not at odds with the ongoing regional initiatives-regional commision. Letter received.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Regional Development Corporation--does it have a CEDS and is the ACCWC consistent with it

Project Need

The Arlington Community Arts and Wellness Center Project (working title) addresses many needs of the community.

1. There is a need for preserving property in the Village District from potential blight or incompatible development. In 2017, St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church closed its doors, leaving a two-acre property with three buildings empty in the heart of the Arlington Village Historic District and exposing the town to blight vulnerability. The Catholic Diocese of Burlington owns and maintains the property through a trust administered by Christ Our Savior Parish Charitable Trust, dated December 22, 2008, but

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they are motivated to sell. The property could remain empty, continuing to degrade, or it could be purchased by an entity that might build/renovate so that it is incompatible with the Village Historic District and not enhance community life.

2. There is a need to improve the physical wellness of the Arlington Area by providing indoor fitness and access to a cardiovascular sport that is easy to learn, affordable and playable throughout life; yet, there is no comprehensive public program or facilities within a 15-mile radius. a) According to the Battenkill Valley Health Center (BVHC), which serves over 50% of the Arlington area, 57.5% of their patients over the age of 65 suffer from chronic diseases and would benefit from increased physical activity. b) The BVHC patients (infant to over 65) from the Arlington Area have an overall obesity rate of 67%; there is a relationship between obesity and Medicaid recipients. Furthermore, the obesity rates rise dramatically by 46% post high school graduation; it is clear a lifelong sport or physical activity is essential. (For more information on the BVHC, Arlington area obesity rates and its relation to Medicaid please see 2.B.1). c) Arlington has a Recreation Park in fair weather and is used frequently, but there is no fitness space for inclement or winter weather. A number of years ago, there was a *Curves*, which was popular but has since closed. Some residents travel to Manchester or Bennington to join for-profit classes and fitness centers, but they all require money and transportation. d) Local yoga classes and the Bone Builder classes, sponsored by the Vermont Health Department, lack a dedicated site and meet in adaptive spaces (churches and the town library). e) There is a lack of squash courts which is a need determined by the local youth participants of the 2014-2018 AAEP afterschool and summer pilot program, Green Mountain Squash, designed to improve adolescent physical health through the sport of squash (among other targets). Moreover, currently there is only one winter sport offered at the school. (For more information about Green Mountain Squash and its partner Arlington Arts and Enrichment Program, please see 3.C)

3. There is a need for comprehensive after school and summer programming and internships targeting ages 12 and up for enrichment, wellness (other than the school's athletic program), and academic support (There is some programming for elementary students and the Arlington Area Childcare Center/ Happy Days Playschool offers a quality learning environment for infants to age twelve). a) In the summer, most middle school students have little to no access to summer camps and programming because of the expense and required transportation. b) High school students lack a comprehensive internship program which is essential to student engaged and envisioning their future. The Arlington Memorial High School identified a need to partner with the community and create alternative learning pathways. There is an initiative in place to expand 'flexible pathways' which includes fifteen internships for the fall with local businesses. These trends over recent years show programming and student support outside the traditional classroom is needed.

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4. With the Arlington area's median income \$10,000 (VHFA) behind the average Vermont median family, the area needs potential economic development that "reinforces historical development trends and (is) compatible with Arlington's rural character." (Arlington Municipal Plan) a) While Arlington attracts recreational tourism, it has not yet capitalized on its historical roots nor the artists who lived in and were inspired by Arlington (For a history of Arlington's association with 20th Century American artists, please see 3.D). Furthermore, there are few tourism programs, attractions or larger spaces to hold events. b) There is no tourism information center. The Arlington's Chamber of Commerce closed over ten years ago and merged with the Manchester region, only to see that organization close in 2016. c) In May of 2019, the Bennington County Cultural Plan spotlighted the 'poor cultural infrastructure in the County.' There is a need for more venues and attractions to bring visitors to Southwestern Vermont. d) The Art and Tourism Sub-Committee from the Arlington Area Renewal Project (For more information on the Arlington Area Renewal Project please see 2.A.1). a) created an exhibition, *Norman Rockwell's Arlington; American's Home Town*, which focuses on how Rockwell's images of Arlington shaped the national identity. The exhibit will be at the Vermont History Museum from August 2019 to February 2020; once the exhibit leaves Montpelier, it has no permanent home. (For more information on the Rockwell exhibit, please see 3.D) e) The Arlington Historical Society, which ran from 1934-1975, is reorganizing but has no home for its growing collection. (For more information on the Arlington Historical Society, please see 3.D). f) There is no available, appropriate office space to rent or co-work which could attract businesses to settle or grow in Arlington. According to the Vermont Department of Labor, there are 99 'business' establishments in the town, yet few have office space. (For more information on remote work-force potential, please see 2.D.1)

5. There is no community center or meeting space for events that seat over 150 people. The Arlington area has space for small public and private communal meetings (school, public library, legion hall, churches and etc), but the School's MACK Performing Art Center seats only 150 and larger performances exceed the seating. For example, the choral concerts need multiple seatings and the annual Christmas show, graduation etc need to be performed in the gym. Additionally, the Russell Collection Curator, often gives historical lectures at the Martha Canfield Memorial Library, where a crowd of 40+ regularly attend. The Library is equipped to comfortably seat 30, and many of these guests are from surrounding areas. Aside from library marketing and an ad in the local paper, there is little PR. If a more central location and expanded marketing were to be in place, a much larger audience would attend, resulting in additional income for the Library.

2 Describe the manner in which the need was determined, and how your project will meet the needs described above.

A .1. The need to preserve property from blight or incompatible development in the center of town was determined by the Arlington Area Renewal Project. In 2017, community members concerned with stagnant population growth, dwindling local businesses and increasing amount of blighted buildings, formed the Arlington Area Renewal Project; a coalition open to all to share their voice in the area's revitalization. Five key focus/needs were identified: housing, education, economic development, outdoor recreation, and arts and tourism. Community stakeholders were tapped to lead each subsequent committee. The Renewal Project meets regularly and is open to residents; in addition, subcommittees and forums meet throughout the year. The Town Renewal Committee identified the following need: "to create a plan to help the Town, Rec Park nonprofit, Masons and Lion's Club, school district, and fire and rescue to work more cohesively in order to maximize town resources, to work with property owners who need to have their properties brought back to acceptable levels; and to work with tourism committee, and Arlington Garden Club, and other stakeholders to formulate and implement a plan to beautify the downtown of Arlington." b) The need to preserve the Church Property from further blight was determined by a building inspection, done in January of 2019, which outlined that "the structural systems of the buildings are serviceable, the heating and plumbing systems need to be returned to service, the electrical system needs to be repaired and upgraded, the exterior is in need of repair and upgrading, and the roof is serviceable. While the property is in 'average' condition, it is in need of repairs and maintenance."

2. To meet the need for saving property from blight or incompatible development, the ACAWC will restore and revitalize the dormant, two-acre site in the middle of the Arlington Village Historic District and enhance the community by supporting existing community entities (schools, Martha Canfield Library and Russell Vermontiana Collection, Battenkill Valley Health Center, the Recreation Park, Community House, and more) as a hub for: a community fitness/wellness center and squash courts, a dedicated home for after school, summer and internship program, a dedicated space for art, history and cultural exhibits and tourism, a 250-seat theatre as well as office space. b) The Arlington Arts and Enrichment Program (AAEP), a non-profit organization, will act as the 'umbrella' entity for the Center. The AAEP has a history of partnership with the community groups listed above. c) The Church property will serve as a link between schools, library, town and the Rec Park (for a further description of the centrality of the property to the town, please see 3.A). This location is key to the vitality, beauty, historic and cultural preservation of the town.

B. 1. The need for an indoor fitness/wellness center was determined by data from the Battenkill Valley Health Center (BVHC) which serves 1,649 patients from the Arlington

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area and accounts for almost 50% of the total population for Arlington, Sandgate and Sunderland. It's patients 0-18 years old are 25% obese with 48% of those patients on Medicaid; of the BVHC patients 19-64, 71% are obese with 24% of those patients on Medicaid; of the BVHC patients 65 and older, 77% are obese with 83% of those patients on Medicare. (BVHC, 2019) The jump in obesity rates from 25% in the teen years to 71% in the adult years illustrates the need for healthy, affordable, and accessible fitness/wellness facilities and services especially for low to moderate income residents. As mentioned in their letter of support, BVHC is 'excited ...Arlington residents will have access to physical exercise services throughout the year; no facility currently exists like this.' Moreover, the wellness/fitness center addresses Goal 15.2 of the Arlington Municipal Plan: "the Town should make every effort to maintain and extend access to auxiliary (wellness) service." There is a public workout facility in Bennington (15 miles to the south), but there are only for-profit fitness facilities and services in Manchester (15 miles to the north). Moreover, Arlington's greatest age demographic is the 65-74 age bracket (33% of whom receive Medicare) and a wellness center close to home would benefit this age group because of cost, transportation issues or distance. b) The results from the Green Mountain Squash four-year assessment meeting with student participants and directors determined that GMS could not continue without squash courts, and there are no courts within a 50-mile radius (and then only one public court in Rutland). Student participants said it was difficult to participate and improve without regular access to courts, and the directors mentioned how the program could not flourish without courts and more infrastructure (GMS had played squash on a local business' single court. GMS not only outgrew the court, but it was extremely difficult for the students to gain access to the private company's court).

2. In order to meet the needs of the community wellness and fitness, the Church Property's existing Parish Hall, a one-story building, could be retrofitted into a fitness center with workout machines, treadmills, elliptical machines, weights and spinning bikes. a) The fitness center could also work with BVHC to facilitate their clients' accessibility to the gym, helping the BVHC meet their targets for health and wellness. b) The fitness center could include the construction of two squash courts and would be open to all community members with lessons and programming. In addition, the courts (wood floor surface) can double as dedicated, appropriate spaces for yoga, Bone Building, and stretching classes. Potentially, a 'movable' glass wall would allow for one multipurpose space.

C. 1. The need for afterschool middle and high school programming was determined by a) the 2016-17 findings from the Arlington School District Education Committee, comprised of school stakeholders, parents and business leaders, who hoped "to create a coalition of businesses and

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not-for-profit to expand our educational opportunities beyond our school walls, and build on these connections to integrate Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) to cutting-edge educational opportunities for our students.” b) In 2017, according to the Vermont Department of Labor, 91.9% of Arlington students received diplomas with one student joining the workforce, four attending the CDC, three going to community college and the rest attending four-year colleges. While these are positive statistics, they have not always been so. For example, in 2010, 75% of the school’s graduates went to college which decreased significantly in 2013 with only 46% attending college. From both the graduating classes of 2011 and 2012, an average of 20% of the students dropped out of college before completing their post-secondary degree. Furthermore, of the 25-34-year-old residents of Arlington, 90.9% have a high school diploma but only 28.8% have a bachelor’s degree (VT Department of Labor, 2017) c) The need aligns with Arlington’s Municipal Plan; Goal 4.8 is to ‘provide outstanding educational and childcare services to the community (and) is a fundamental objective of the Town.’” d) The need for summer camp was identified by Green Mountain Squash Pilot Program which started a free summer camp in 2014. For example, the ten Green Mountain Squash students (representing 28% of their middle school class) had no other accessible programming during the summer because of a lack of transportation as well as the expense associated with other summer programs. There are some local summer options: Burdett Commons, located in the Arlington Community House, hosts occasional vacation camps as does a local church. There is also a local 4-H camp, Camp Ondawa, which runs a three-week program each summer, but it is not free and offers no scholarships.

2. In order to meet the needs for after school, summer and internship programming, the ACAW Center will create consistent, quality after school and summer programming for ages 13-18, particularly for underserved middle and high school students by a) revitalizing the AAEP’s after school, summer, and weekend classes like yoga, cooking, gardening, technology classes based on student interest; b) expanding the successful, free pilot program for Green Mountain Squash. A home base and two courts would allow GMS to more than double the number of students served. (For more on the benefits of the Green Mountain Squash model as a quality after school program, please see 3.B); and d) creating a rich internship program within the larger community and even within the ACAW Center with tourism and cultural programming (marketing, writing, media, tour guide, outdoor recreation etc) and after school programs (assistant coaches and teachers for younger students) and the potential theater (lighting, sound, marketing, event planning).

D. 1. The need for a potential economic development was determined by: a) the Arlington Renewal Project Arts and Tourism Sub-Committee which found that Arlington’s relationship with art, culture and history is expansive, yet little is done to market it. The Sub-Committee determined a need to create and implement a comprehensive marketing plan that includes

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promoting the town's natural resources, artistic and historical heritage, special events, and small businesses. b) The Arlington Municipal Plan states, "Clearly there is a need for a greater diversity of shopping, dining and entertainment to revitalize these village centers." c) The need for a permanent home for the exhibit, *Norman Rockwell's Arlington; American's Home Town*, was determined by its curators, and similarly, the Martha Canfield Library Board voiced its concerns for how to house the Arlington Historical Society's artifacts and exhibits. d) In 2018, 1761 Arts, a non-profit organization in East Arlington, produced the musical "Rockwell" which was voted by the *New York Times* as 'Theatre Summer Festival Pick for 2018'; it was performed at Manchester's Southern Vermont Art Center. There was no space big enough in Arlington. e) The 2019 Bennington County Cultural Plan conducted its own feasibility study, public meetings and resident surveys to strengthen the creativity in Southwestern Vermont. f) There are other smaller performance spaces in Arlington and other larger performance spaces in the County, but few are dedicated to music which could be a potential niche. For example, The Perfect Wife, which used to be one of the only places to hear bands, closed, and recently, Stratton Mountain's Wintergrass Music Festival had bands playing in Manchester restaurants.

2. In order to meet the needs of economic development, the ACAWC could become a hub for tourism, cultural and wellness events. a) The 1910 Watkins House, used as the Rectory, could be converted to a tourism center with exhibit space for the Rockwell *Home Town* exhibit and the Arlington Historical Society on the first floor (For further description of some tourism programming done in the past, please see 3.D). b) The Catholic Church, built in 1963, can be retrofitted into a theater, perhaps specializing in music. It currently seats over 275 in a sloped ampi-theater-style hall which could be available for concerts, special events (plays, TED Talks, presentations etc) and even local events, including school and local concerts, plays, meetings, adult continuing education events and a variety of speakers. c) Squash courts could be a tourism and economic attraction. For example, Williams College, 30 miles south, hosts numerous US Squash tournaments. In 2012, 250 players traveled to and stayed in Williamstown for the weekend-long tournament; players included local Mount Greylock High School students. Professional squash courts could be part of the US Squash tournament schedule. Furthermore, US Squash organizes over 200 annual tournaments; none are in Vermont. ([For a description of the indirect impact and job creation benefits, please see "Job Creation from Theater and Exhibit Space" and "Indirect Impact of Theater and Exhibit Space and Indirect Impact of Fitness"](#))

E. 1. The need for economic development and office space in Arlington was determined by dwindling local businesses. a) In the last fifteen years, Arlington has lost two grocery stores, two pharmacies, three restaurants, a law office and numerous other small businesses. The town gained a bank branch, a recording studio, and a *Dollar General*. b) When the Battenkill Valley Health Center purchased its current buildings, it bought the only two remaining office rental spaces in the Village Center. c) The need for office space is determined by the trend for

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communal work space; according to *Forbes Magazine*, 50% of the US workforce will soon work remotely, and by 2027, freelance workers are projected to be the majority. Arlington is an ideal location because of its community, outdoor recreation opportunities and proximity to Albany, Boston and New York. Arlington has no current office space to meet this potential demand.

2. To meet this need for economic development and office space. The Rectory, a large, 1910 three-story Colonial Revival house could be renovated to allow for office space on the second floor to attract a more diverse workforce.

F. 1. a)The need for more community meeting space was determined by the fact that some of the school performances need to have multiple shows or move into the gym in order for the community to gather. b) The need for additional cultural event seating was determined by the amount of participants attending discussions at the Library and the lack of available seating.

2. In order to meet the need for more community meeting space, the School District, Library and other groups could use the theater described in 2.D.2 for a free or reduced rate.

3.

2. A. Describe why this is the best approach to meet this need.

A. The Church Property is the best approach for the ACAWC because of the centrality in the Village District. The property is essential to preserving the character of Arlington but also could give a home to much needed local programming and economic development. On its southern border, the property begins the village corridor and abuts the historic Arlington Inn, sponsor and location of the town's farmers' market. The property is diagonal from St. James Church, built in 1803, and the Town Green. Two buildings south is the Arlington Community House, a 1826 brick federal home, which focuses on smaller meeting space for the Arlington Garden Club, Al Anon, a senior citizen's group, Girl Scouts, and the Arlington Public Health Nurses Association, a used book store to raise money for the Library, and Burdett Commons, an organization to promote events and activities that foster healthy community, and the Arlington Town Hall. On its northern border, the property is diagonal to the Arlington Recreation Park. The Property's sidewalk connects the school, library and village center to the walking entrance of the Park. Additionally, the Church Property is on the public transportation route (Green Mountain Express); the location allows people access who rely on public transportation from nearby towns, Sunderland, Manchester, Shaftsbury, or Bennington.

B. The Fitness Center is the best approach for ACAW Center because of a) its proximity to the Battenkill Valley Health Center who provides comprehensive primary care and preventive care, including health, oral and mental health/substance abuse services to persons of all ages regardless of their ability to pay or health insurance status. BVHC's clients include over 1600 patients just in the Arlington, Sunderland, and Sandgate area. In 2018, BVHC had 288 Blueprint visits (Vermont Blueprint for Health is a state-led, nationally recognized initiative that helps healthcare providers meet the medical and social needs of people in their communities), nurse case management, counseling, health coaching and more are no cost to patients. b) The BVHC and the AAEP could jointly encourage and promote free or affordable fitness particularly when there are no other available options. ([For a description of what the ACAWC will offer to BHVC, please see comments from their letter of support excerpt ‘How Need was Determined for a fitness center; for more information on the potential sliding fee scale for ACAWC, please see: Benefits for LMI with the Fitness Center; and for more information about the LMI patients who are part of BVHC, please see “Need for Fitness Center”](#)) c) Squash is an indoor, cardiovascular sport that is affordable, playable year-round and easy to learn. Additionally, once constructed, the courts need little maintenance. Other indoor sports could be investigated: racquetball is popular (there are courts in Bennington) and Pickle Ball (combination of tennis, badminton and ping pong; there are five courts already in Bennington) is a rising sport known for its playability. [Letter of support from BVHC](#)

C. The Arlington Arts and Enrichment Program is the best approach because of its past community impact and history: The 501c3 non-profit has successfully served Arlington for over sixteen years and is uniquely qualified because of its sponsorship and support of Arlington youth and because of its promotion of the arts and wellness within the community. Furthermore, the AAEP has partnered in the past with local businesses and organizations such as Mack Molding, The Orvis Company, the Arlington Inn, the Martha Canfield Library, and the Arlington School District. If there was a ‘center’ for all public facilities and services, the Arlington area non-profit organizations could increase their partnerships to maximize their collective impact. With the fruition of the ACAWC, AAEP’s previously implemented programs could once again thrive: the afterschool, summer, and Green Mountain Squash programs, and proven fundraising sources and events. For detailed descriptions of previous programming, please see below:

- 1. Description of the AAEP After School Program:** The program ran from 2004-2011 at Fisher Elementary and offered 30 classes (fencing, Japanese language, dance, Lego bridge engineering, fly fishing, mosaics, etc) serving over 270 students. Local community members were teachers, including artists and business people. Additionally,

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the AAEP ran annual week-long artists-in-residencies (circus arts, dance and storytelling) and organized Cafe Nights bringing parents and community members into the school. In 2011, the Arlington School District, with the help and support of the AAEP, applied for and received a 21st Century Learning Grant for \$500,000 over five years to manage the after school program. This grant ended in 2015, and there is now, again, a need for this type of program in the elementary school.

2. **Description of Green Mountain Squash:** From 2014-2018, The AAEP piloted the after school and summer program Green Mountain Squash (GMS) which offered a free three-week summer camp and after school program for ten middle school students to broaden horizons, improve physical health, foster academic achievement, and promote personal vision through academic enrichment, the sport of squash and community service. The pilot program followed ten students from middle school to high school graduation. Students toured local businesses, understood the strengths and challenges of the town through personal interviews and exploration of local resources (Martha Canfield Library, Russell Collection, Battenkill Watershed Alliance, Bennington Museum, Clark Art Museum and a meeting with our State Representative), and visited protected local wildlife areas (Battenkill River, Canfield Pines, Branch Pond, and Hill Farm Preserve). Students learned about the unique environment of Arlington and ways to be stewards of their community. Students went on college visits and met regularly for academic support. They continued to play squash once a week. In 2016 because of a need for additional squash courts, Green Mountain Squash partnered with Berkshire School in Sheffield, MA (90-minutes from Arlington) and traveled, when possible, for squash lessons from the school's staff and student volunteers. In 2017, it was clear the program could not continue without frequent, easy access to squash courts; students needed courts after school hours and on the weekends as well as have courts within walking distance from school. The group continued to get together when possible. Of the ten pilot program students, some have moved away or changed schools; however, four of the six who graduated this spring are attending college or furthering their education. Most will be the first in their families to attend college.

Green Mountain Squash is the best approach for quality after school and summer programming because the AAEP is in a unique position to turn the piloted program into a long-term initiative, which will benefit the area's underserved youth. If Green Mountain Squash has courts, it can expand its free after school and summer program. GMS could potentially join the *Squash and Education Alliance* (SEA), a youth development model that is a year-round, three-day-a-week program after school, on the weekends and in the summer. Following an 'inch wide, mile deep' approach to youth development, urban squash programs create meaningful and life-long experiences,

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lessons, and support for each student, from the time they enter the program through their college graduation. 97% of SEA students graduate high school and enroll in post-secondary programs, and 65% of their students earn a BA within six years compared with the national average of 24% for low income families. (nationalurbansquash.org) If Green Mountain Squash joined SEA, it would have access to its scholarship funding, travel subsidies, staff retreats, tournaments, camps and training squads. Additionally, the courts will also be open to the public with lessons and free clinics.

3. Description of AAEP Fundraising and Past Funding Sources: The AAEP successfully ran fundraising events, averaging \$6,000 a year. In 2007, the AAEP partnered with Arlington Memorial High School to be the development arm for the MACK Performing Arts construction, helping raise over \$700,000. In the past, the AAEP received grants from the Agnes Lindsay Trust, The Donnelley Foundation, and the Small and Inspiring Grant from the Community Foundation, the Stratton Mountain Foundation and countless other funding sources. Moreover, The AAEP also organized a free community/donor event at the Bennington Museum for the *Challenges 4 Freedom* exhibit, featuring works by the Arlington illustrators (Rockwell, Atherton, Pelham, Schaeffer, and Hughes) as well as other celebrated artists. By creating synergy with other non-profits in the area, the AAEP could leverage fundraising and resources to maximize and create cohesive programming.

The fundraising events and sources are the best approach for the Arlington Community Arts and Wellness Center (ACAWC) because of the proven prior commitment by the community for the AAEP programming as well as AAEP's commitment to pursuing all available funds by writing grants as well as building partnerships with local businesses, other non-profit organizations and community members.

D. The ACAWC would be the best approach for economic development.a) A tourism center could celebrate the town's culture with famous resident artists and American history. The artists include: Norman Rockwell (he lived in Arlington for fourteen years) and countless other illustrators from the *Saturday Evening Post*-Mead Schaeffer, Gene Pelham, John Atherton and George Hughes; life-long resident Dorothy Canfield Fisher, author and activist (also named by Elenor Roosevelt as one of the most influential women in the US); artist Rockwell Kent; composer Carl Ruggles; illustrator Don Trachte, creator of the comic strip *Henry*; as well as sculptor Harriet Miller; and artist Gilbert Smith. During Norman Rockwell's fourteen-year residency, countless of his masterpieces were painted in Arlington (including the *Four*

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Freedoms) and were inspired by town buildings, area sites and the 200 local models. b) The Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge MA attracted over 138,000 visitors last year to Berkshire County; closer to Arlington, Hildene Museum in Manchester brings in 42,000 visitors annually. By capitalizing on Arlington's relationship with Rockwell and proximity to Hildene, the town could attract a similar number. The centerpiece could be the *Rockwell: Arlington's Home Town*, currently on loan to the Vermont History Museum and described as follows: "From roughly 1920 to 1960, Arlington was the center of an influential community of artists whose work shaped our image of America...*Norman Rockwell's Arlington: America's Home Town* chronicles Rockwell and the other artists who lived in Arlington, as well as the many local residents who posed for the scenes of everyday life they portrayed. Some of the most iconic images we know of life in America were in fact, portraits of Arlington's citizens." (Vermont History Museum website) c) Likewise, the Arlington Historical Society (organized in 1934, revived from 1954 to 1975, yet inactive for many years until now) is re-organizing and has a mission: "to stimulate and maintain interest in the history of the Aringtons, including Sandgate and Sunderland." The new historical society will be a separate organization from the Russell Vermontiana Collection housed at the library, but is expected to work closely with them...The proposed historical society is expected to collect and display artifacts..., encourage the preservation of historic architecture, and sponsor seminars on local history." (Martha Canfield Library website) d) Auxiliary programs could be included to promote the town's artistic and historical heritage with guided driving and walking tours, mobile apps, signage, programming etc. ([To see a more complete list of potential events, "How the Theater and Exhibit Space will Meet the Need"](#)). The tourism exhibit, theater, and programming could also potentially indirectly impact economic development for the area. The Vermont Arts Council conducted an economic impact study in 2014 which identified specific arts businesses (including museums, historical sites, and performance arts companies) that generated \$551 million dollars in economic activity. ([For more information on the indirect economic development, please "Job Creation, Theater and Exhibit" and Indirect Impact on Low to Moderate Income Theater and Exhibit Space](#)) e) Potential office space could attract businesses. The second floor of the Rectory could be office or co-working space, which would be an ideal location for any small business or individuals. The Rectory can have a common kitchen, conference space and business infrastructure (printers, internet, and copiers). f) Squash courts could attract players from outside the area and might add to the direct and indirect impact for economic development. ([For more information about the direct economic impact, please see "How to Meet the Needs of Economic Development" and for indirect impact, please see "Indirect impact of fitness center](#)) Moreover, squash is played by 20 million people throughout the world, and the fastest growing market for squash is in the United States. From 2009 to 2014, the number of squash players in the US increased by 101% with junior players' participation increasing 400% Locally, there are many players in the County who lack access to courts within a 50-mile plus radius. If they are

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full-paying members, their fees would help fund the overall fitness program. (For more on the income-producing stream of the fitness center and squash courts, please see)

4. Do we know of any other approaches?

In 2018, the non-profit 1761 Arts looked into the property as a theater space, dance studio, and residential space but decided not to pursue the endeavor. A local business also was interested in the property briefly for a small manufacturing company but the adaptation to the sloped, amphitheater-style floor in the church was too expensive.

All appropriate funding sources have been sought.

5 a) The Arlington Area Renewal Project has approached a few investors to see if they would be interested in developing the property and then ‘rent’ the Parish Hall and Church to the Arlington Arts and Enrichment Program who would then organize arts, history and cultural events, and wellness program for the theater and fitness center. b) The Arlington Arts and Enrichment Program will also pursue a grant with the Vermont Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness & Sports which is due September 9th and is allocated towards planning for development of new community wellness initiatives, improvement of existing community wellness programs, and/or collaboration between worksites and community wellness initiatives across the state of Vermont. c) Green Mountain Squash will find all the funding for the squash courts independently, including private donations and grants with the assistance of US Squash, a national, non-profit organization.

6. Explain the level of municipal government support.

On July 26, the Select Board voted to apply for the planning grant, and the town of Arlington will oversee the grant’s general administration.

How well the project meets a Consolidated Plan Goal

7. Describe how your project meets the goals of the Consolidated Plan and identify the strategies that will be employed to meet those goals.

Public facilities and services:

A Public facilities and Services for Fitness and Wellness

The ACWAC will create public facilities and services for the town and the larger community by housing a wellness center for all Arlington area residents and beyond who need a place to exercise, develop strength, and other related physical well-being services. The BVHC and the proposed fitness center will work together to market to all Arlington Area residents as well as

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other BVHC patients. The fitness center and squash courts will have a sliding fee scale similar to the one used by the Battenkill Valley Health Center to ensure the facilities and service are free or affordable. ([For more information about the BVHC Sliding Fee scale, please see “Impact for LMI”](#)).

C. Public Facilities and Services for after school, summer and internship programs

a) The AAEP could run its previous programming in the theater, fitness center and Rectory (use of the kitchen and exhibit spaces) for afterschool programming, and the squash courts would be used by the Green Mountain Squash program b) In the summer, the theater could be used by organizations such as the Missoula Children’s Theater which offers free youth performance camps. c) Throughout the year, the different sectors of the Center could be used for internship opportunities. d) The Property’s garage could also be used as an art workshop space, garage band, or a cafe.

D. Public Facilities and Services for Economic Development

a) The exhibit space and tourism center could be home to rotating and permanent exhibits (like the *Rockwell: Home Town*) celebrating Arlington’s history, arts and culture. An example of past programming is the Dorothy Canfield Fisher Symposium Weekend, sponsored by the Vermont Humanities Council in the 1990s, which attracted many visitors to the area with various speakers, a dramatic reading of Fisher’s play and site tours. b) The Theater could be home to a 250-seat space which would allow for public facilities and services for plays, music and other cultural events. c) Local cultural groups such as Bennington County Chorale (which just lost its permanent home at Southern Vermont College), Dorset Theatre Festival, Arts 1761, Stratton Mountain Wintergrass Festival, etc could rent the space for their performances. d) Rental office space would encourage or grow small businesses in the town. ([For more on the indirect impact of the Center, please see \(Indirect Impact for Economic Development\)](#). e) a cafe could create a place for tourists as well as cultural events. Furthermore, it could be a community gathering place. Currently, there is only a Stewarts in the town center.

Job creation

a. **The Center itself could** create jobs because of the increased, heavy daily use of the property as well as temporary jobs when the Property is under renovation.

B. Job creation for the Fitness Center and squash courts

The Fitness Center could create jobs with its own Program Director and instructors as well as a squash coach.

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C. Job creation by the AAEP after school, summer and internship programs. The Arlington Arts and Enrichment Program will need to expand beyond its current size potentially creating job opportunities for an Executive Director, Green Mountain Squash Director as well as coordinator positions as part of the after school and summer program. Currently, Burdett Commons has a part time director and a relationship between AAEP and Burdett Commons would support and increase the director's role. [Letter from Amy](#)

D. Job creation for the theater, exhibit space and tourism center a) The theatre could create jobs for all support staff (ushers, caterers, parking etc) for plays, concerts, and arts and cultural activities. Potentially, the theater would need a sound and lighting director. The theater would also employ local musicians for concerts. b) All the theater and cultural events would indirectly benefit local businesses. The Arlington Inn is next door with its accommodations, dining room and bar. Other local inns and motels would benefit from theater attendees for meals and lodging. c) The exhibit space could potentially need a coordinator and staff to monitor and sell tickets. The tourism center would also need staff. As these spaces and programs grow, the job potential could be even greater. d) A cafe could need servers and a chef. e) Internships would be available for high school students. e) A cafe could employ servers and a self.

E. Job Creation with rental office space

The Rectory with its office space for up to 20 employees could attract small businesses to house their offices in Arlington.

Is the project consistent with the local Municipal Plan?

7. [Letter from Keith](#)

8. Is the project consistent with the regional plan?

We need a certification from the Regional Planning Commission that the project is consistent with the Regional Plan. See Jim Sullivan. Letter from Jim Sullivan received.

9. NA

Degree of health/safety risks to beneficiaries

10. Describe how this project, if it were implemented, would directly address a health or safety issue for the intended beneficiaries.

The Fitness Center would benefit the health of the community

- a) The Wellness Center would give local residents a place to increase their physical well-being with a fitness center and squash courts. Access to a close, affordable fitness center would encourage a healthy lifestyle by decreasing obesity; a great health risk for the Arlington area with 67% overall obesity rate. A nearby, accessible fitness option is essential for the BVHC patients over 65 of whom 57.5% suffer from chronic diseases and would benefit from increased physical activity (BVHC data). b) Squash is an easy to learn, cardiovascular sport that is playable year round. Additionally, *Forbes Magazine* named squash the ‘number 1 healthiest sport for getting and staying fit’. The squash courts would increase middle and high school students’ participation in fitness with additional sports choices. The squash courts could also be a dedicated home to the yoga, Bone Building and stretching classes now scattered around the area. The Center would also be on the public transportation route which would make the site accessible to those unable to drive.
- b) **The after school and summer programming would benefit the health and safety of the community** by increasing student engagement in school, fitness, and personal goal setting. Quality after school programming can increase the health and school engagement of the students but also decrease crime and risky behavior; all of which make for a safer and healthier community. A Harvard Family Research Study found “that children and youth who participate in afterschool programs can reap a host of positive benefits in a number of interrelated outcome areas—academic, social/emotional, prevention, and health and wellness. Thus, extra time for academics by itself may be necessary but may not be sufficient to improve academic outcomes. Balancing academic support with a variety of engaging, fun, and structured extracurricular or co-curricular activities that promote youth development in a variety of real-world contexts appears to support and improve academic performance. The hours after school, between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., offer opportunities for juvenile crime, sexual activity, and other risky behaviors such as drug and alcohol use. Research and evaluation studies have shown that participation in afterschool programs have a positive impact on juvenile crime and help reduce pregnancies, teen sex, and boys’ marijuana use (Goldschmidt, Huang, & Chinen, 2007; Philliber, Kaye, & Herrling, 2001; Philliber, Kaye, Herrling, & West, 2002).’ Moreover, ‘the afterschool setting presents an opportunity to address the growing problem of obesity among children and youth. Research has shown that afterschool programs can contribute to healthy lifestyles and increased knowledge about exercise and nutrition.’” ([For more information about the benefits of Green Mountain Squash’s model, please see “Best Approaches; Description of Green Mountain Squash](#))

11. Please describe, if applicable, any particular issues that make this project time sensitive.

The land and buildings are currently owned by The Catholic Diocese of Burlington who is motivated to sell the property. However, the property could be sold to an entity that might alter the property to be incompatible with the Village Historic District nor enhance the community. Recently, there was a contract on the property which fell through. *Do we have any other time constraints?*

Project Impact

Level of beneficiary involvement in the development of the project

12. Describe how persons of low and moderate income were involved in the development of this project. How have they shown support?

LMI community members were involved in the development through the Arlington Area Renewal Project, open to all, which holds regular meetings made public through the local newspapers as well as the Arlington Facebook page. ([for more information about the economic overview of Arlington and its extended area, see question “Service Area Description” and “Need for Fitness Center for low to moderate income families”.](#))

B. The need for a fitness center for low to moderate income families was determined by the BVHC: a) Their data derives from their number of Blueprint visits (288) and Medicaid patients (21% of the patients under the age of 64) and rate of obesity (67% overall) for the Arlington area residents. ([for more information, see “How Need for Fitness Center was Determined](#)). ([for a description of the lack of public and affordable fitness options in the area, please see “Need for Fitness Center](#)) b). According to the US Census, Arlington’s poverty rate is 11.8% and 15.5% for families with children under 18 who make up 37% of Arlington’s population. Sandgate, part of the Arlington area, has a poverty rate of 26%; Sunderland’s rate is 4.8%. c) The need for squash courts for low to moderate income families was determined by participants of the free Green Mountain Squash Program in its final assessment of the pilot program.

C. The need for the after school, summer and internship programs involved low to moderate income families. a) In the Arlington School District, over 45% of middle and high school students take advantage of the Free and Reduced Lunch program (according to the 2016 Vermont Agency on Education, the state average is 44% with only twelve middle and high schools in Vermont having higher percentages than Arlington). b) BUILD workshops that brainstormed the community needs included the entire Arlington Memorial Middle School 7th

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grade. c) Students have held numerous design brainstorming sessions and voiced their desired after school and summer programming and internships. In 2018, they presented their ideas to the leaders of the Arlington Renewal Project and in 2019, to school leaders and the greater school community.

We will hold a town meeting about the site and the potential. Gym committee? Theatre committee? Survey on facebook? We need to outline what they said and how we gathered the information.

How well the project indirectly impacts the community and/or additional LMI people

13. Describe the indirect impact to the community, if it were to be implemented and other LMI beneficiaries that may be indirectly served by project.

B. The indirect impact of the fitness center would develop as a grassroots effort with participating residents encouraging their friends and family members to try wellness activities on their own. a) Green Mountain Squash participants could encourage their family members to play. b) The Fitness Center could create pathways for BVHC to meet targets for healthy living and reduce obesity rates. In addition to the fitness center and squash courts having a sliding fee scale, similar to the one used by the Battenkill Valley Health Center, the ACAW Center will investigate how full-pay memberships can fund the free/affordable programming. ([For more information of sliding fee scale, please see “Benefit for Low to Moderate Income”](#))

C. The indirect impact of the after school and summer programming and internship program would encourage younger siblings or children, who look up to older students' as role models, to participate. b) Similarly to its implementation of Chinese classes and strong sports, the School District is always looking to differentiate itself from other area schools in order to attract more students. c) An internship program could give high school students invaluable job experience and create pathways for non-college tracked students..

D. The indirect impact the economic development: the exhibit space, fitness center and theater a) could increase the vitality of the community and capitalize on Arlington's incredible resources as the cradle of Southwestern Vermont's art and history which has long been undervalued and underutilized. b) With more visitors and residents staying and investing in the community, the economy of the area will create more jobs, increase school age population, and enhance local businesses that employ and support LMI families. c) The fitness center and squash courts could draw visitors. Moreover, the squash courts could bring players from the greater area and add to the economic development by staying and dining locally or buying from

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local stores and services. c) The synergy between the theater and the exhibit space would open doors for high profile speakers, theater companies etc that would attract a larger audience from outside the Arlington area. d) As an equidistant location between Manchester and Bennington, the Center could build the cultural infrastructure needed according to the 2019 Bennington County Cultural Plan.[\(To see more on the direct impact of squash on the economy, please see Meet the needs of Economic Development\)](#). e) The Center could also encourage other small business to open in Arlington.

Letter from local store owner?

Project Feasibility

Readiness to start within four months of award.

14.

Benefit/Timeframe feasibility

15. There must be reasonable expectations from achieving benefits for the persons or low and moderate income in the plans developed with the use of the VCDP funds were it to be implemented. Explain what the anticipated benefits would be and how this was determined.

A. a) With the job creation from the theater, tourism and exhibit spaces, as well as the indirect impact on job creation for local businesses, inns and restaurants, there is the potential for economic development for low to moderate income residents. b) LMI residents could benefit from access to the theater and exhibit space; all cultural and art events could be tied to the sliding fee scale for the fitness membership so that all residents have access regardless of cost.

B.

a) The fitness/wellness center and squash courts would be available for all Arlington area residents on a sliding fee scale similar to the Federal Poverty Guidelines with a scaffold for cost. For example, an individual making less than \$12,490 would have a free membership; one making \$12,491-\$15,613 would get an 80% discount; one making \$15,614-\$18,735 would get a 60% discount, one making \$18,736-\$21,858 would get a 40% discount and only those individuals making over \$24,981 would pay full price. This example was determined by the BVHC sliding fee scale. b) There are a few private courts in the County, so public courts are a unique draw and could garner full

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membership fees from players outside the Arlington area which could be used as an income stream for the free/affordable squash program. This model was determined by the Manchester Town Pool for residents vs non-residents. c) Additionally, the Center would have free squash lessons and clinics offered to the general public.

C. The benefits for low to moderate income residents from an after school and summer program as well as an internship program would give free or affordable programming to all including comprehensive and appropriate programming that supports students' health, confidence and academics. Moreover, Green Mountain Squash, one component of the after school program, could continue to be free for all students. Fundraising and grant writing would be pursued so that after school and summer programming would be free. Internships could focus on underserved students giving them opportunities to train for employment or allowing for the time and space to explore career paths.

16. Time Table:

- A. Provide a project timeline. Include Environmental Release, permits in hand, 100% funding commitments, design completion. Construction completion etc as well as for procurement steps including hiring, execution of contracts achieving Benefit, and any other dates for actions to carry out this project.
- B. How was this time table determined?
The time table was determined by the architect.

Work Completed Prior to Planning Grant (Maybe just provide a brief explanation about this)

Date	Action	Commentary	Determined by
January, 2019	Building inspection completed of church property	Buildings are property are 'servicable' but in need of repair	Lalancette Engineers report

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June 30, 2019	Fire and Safety Review in conducted	Property is safe	Arlington Fire and Safety
July 24, 2019	Architectural Rough Concept Plan and initial plans finished	Total project estimate, including repairs (700,000) and renovation (2,400,000)	Conceptual budget by Bruce King, Architect
July 29, 2019	Select Board votes to apply for the Planning Grant		Select Board minutes
August 21, 2019	Public Notice is sent to local papers	Bennington Banner Manchester Journal	Tear sheet
September 5, 2019	Public Hearing on the Planning Grant		Notes and Attendance required
September 10, 2019	Apply for Planning Grant -Submit additional grant for gym planning		

Work to be Completed once Planning Grant is Received:

November, 2019	-Environmental Review -Historical Review -Hazmat Review -Heating and Plumping Review -Septic Review, -Meeting with Non-Profit Consultant -Radon Test		
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	-Trace utility interconnections between buildings		
December, 2019	Meeting with Architects and Steering Committee to review data from November (above); update concepts; incorporate new ideas from stakeholders and community		
December, 2019-February 2020	-Market and Feasibility study conducted (public meetings, forums, surveys etc)-		
January 2020-November 2021	-Meet with Non Profit Consultant about Fundraising -Fundraising efforts including grants, foundations, and individual donations		
March, 2020	Integrate all into a final re-use concept including site plans and floor plans, and renderings		
April 2020	-Revise and finalize building condition report and develop a		

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	more precise project construction budget		
April 2020	Apply for Implementation grant		
August-December 2020	Prepare final architectural and engineering construction drawings		
February through March 2021	Permitting and Bidding		
April through October 2021	Renovation		
September 2021	Staff organization		
November 2021	Opening		

In Kind Donations Budget

Type	Amount	Contact Person	In-Kind	Date Completed
Grant Writing	\$2,472 (33 hours as of July 31st)	Keelan Family Foundation	X	To date as of 8/17/19
Grant Writing	\$675 (9 hours as of July 31st)	Bebe Bullock	X	To date as of 8/17/19
Architect and Rough Concept Report	\$17,800	Bruce King	X	Completed 7/24/19
Coordination by Arlington Renewal Project	45 hours \$3,625.00	Jim Baker	X	To date as of 8/17/19
Building		Joshua Sherman	X	Completed

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Inspection Report				1/17/19
Fire and Safety Review		Jim Baker	X	Completed 6/30/19
Squash Court Consultation with Steve Hall, McWil Squash		Bill Billock	X	
Acoustic and Lighting consultation		Roger Cooper	X	

Budget for Planning Grant

Type	Cost	Contact Person	Determined by	Date Completed
Architect Assessment Report and Renderings	\$12,300	Bruce King, Architect	7/24/19 Estimate	
Cost of Town Administration of Grant: financial management	\$480 20 hours at \$24.00	Keith Squires	8/29 estimate	
Radon Test				
Trace Utility interconnections between buildings		Randy Novotny		
Consultation for Decommission of Church		Diocese		
Market Study for theater, gym and squash courts, and office space	30,000	Julia Dixon, Peter Fairweather	estimates	

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non profit consultant	\$800	Christine Graham, CPG Enterprises	8/3/19 Estimate	
Updated Boundary and Topographic Survey	\$4,000	Chris Hines	Email estimate 8/31	
septic review				
Assessment for Hazmat				
heating and plumbing review	\$450	Rick Coulter	8/28 Estimate	

18. NA